

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2017

Speaker Paul D. Ryan

Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi

Chairman Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson
Committee on Homeland Security

Chairman Bill Shuster
Ranking Member Peter A. DeFazio
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairmen McCaul and Shuster, and Ranking Members Thompson and DeFazio:

We respectfully seek your commitment that any future disaster-relief legislation considered by the House will provide parity for affected U.S. territories with the states. Americans living in the territories deserve no less.


Legislation providing relief to hurricane victims in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico should afford treatment and access equivalent to state residents for federal resources, assistance, programs, grants, and long-term recovery funds.


The federal government has a special responsibility to the territories and cannot ignore the fact that these jurisdictions lack the local resources of the states. Nevertheless, the federal government routinely gives disparate treatment to the territories, denying millions of Americans equal access to federal programs and funding afforded to the states. Even populous territories like Puerto Rico regularly receive far less funding than the least populous states. Given the devastation wrought already by this year's hurricane season, this unjust funding disparity must not continue.


As Congress considers disaster-relief legislation for victims of the recent hurricanes and any future disasters, we request that you only support legislation that makes federal assistance available to affected U.S. territories on a fair and equal basis *vis-à-vis* the states.

We stand ready to support any effort that provides much-needed federal relief to the victims of recent hurricanes and subsequent disasters affecting Americans in the territories. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,


Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress


Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress


Jennifer Gonzalez-Colon
Member of Congress

CC: Administrator William B. Long, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey, House Committee on Appropriations



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

CC: Administrator William B. Long, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey, House Committee on Appropriations